

BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

April 24, 1963

SUBJECT: Cuban Exiles

QUESTION: Can you spell out for us what of a practical nature the Administration can do to channel the efforts of the Cuban exiles toward the goal of freeing Cuba?

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT:

Since late March when the Government clamped rigorous controls on pinprick raids on Cuba by exile activists a great many questions have been addressed to our intentions toward these exiles and their efforts to overthrow the Castro regime. Since they are unable to invade Cuba themselves, and since the US Government is not prepared to invade the island, the questions usually address themselves to what it is that the exiles may do legitimately or what we would like them to do.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY:

Despite differences that have developed between us and some Cuban exile leaders, we have said repeatedly that we continue to share with them the desire that Cuba can soon regain its freedom. Now we recognize that the lot of an exile, here or anywhere else, is not a happy one, and we can sympathize with their frustration at being powerless to change matters. But I must repeat that we cannot surrender our responsibility to formulate the foreign policy of this country, particularly where it involves not simply our dispute with the Castro regime but the very question of war and peace.

Regarding the specific role of the exile leaders in achieving the goal of a free Cuba, I think there is no disagreement that they should have a voice in the organization of a new government in Cuba. In the meantime, many exiles could avail themselves of the opportunities throughout the country for improving their knowledge and skills, looking to the day when they can effectively utilize them in a free Cuba.